

VZCZCXRO5013
RR RUEHPA
DE RUEHOS #0177 1361040
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 151040Z MAY 08
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9908
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 9622
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0195
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEWMFD/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 000177

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: US COMPANY BOAT HIJACKED; PORTUGUESE,
UKRAINIAN, NIGERIAN CREW HELD IN RIVERS STATE

Classified By: Consul General Donna Blair for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (SBU) The motor vessel Lordes Tide, contracted to Chevron and owned by US company Tidewater Marine, was hijacked by unknown gunmen on May 13 en route from Onne (River State) to Escravos (Delta State). A high ranking Chevron contact confirmed to Econoff on May 14 that two expatriates, the Portuguese captain and Ukrainian first mate, and nine Nigerian nationals are being held captive. There are no known injuries or fatalities. A ransom demand has been issued.

12. (C) While Tidewater has the nominal lead in dealing with the situation, Chevron is providing significant support, especially with government contacts, according to the Chevron source. Control Risks Group (CRG), a private company whose business deals with hostage situations, is handling some of the negotiations and Chevron and others are in contact with the State Security Service (SSS), military Joint Task Force (JTF), Naval Command, and Rivers State Governor Rotimi Amaechi. Chevron has had radio contact with the vessel and views this incident as purely criminal, but noted there is some evidence of support from people onshore.

13. (C) Comment: It is difficult to determine whether the seven month lull in kidnappings by Niger Delta militants has come to an end or whether criminals operating strictly for financial gain have struck again and are responsible for this attack. We have not yet heard any militant group claim responsibility for this kidnapping. We have been in direct contact with SSS through our appropriate office at the Embassy. They are aware that the boat belongs to a U.S. company and that we want it returned as soon as possible. We will continue to be in touch with SSS and Chevron's security contacts to provide whatever assistance they might need from us that is appropriate for us to pursue in this situation. End Comment.

14. (U) This cable was cleared by Embassy Abuja.
BLAIR